DC
SUPERMAN
NATIONAL COMICS
SEPT.
NO. 27
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
12¢
RED AND PROF--TRAPPED BY THAT FANTASTIC SCIENTIST WHO'S CREATING VOLCANO CREATURES IN HIS UNDERGROUND LABORATORY!
"MASTER of the VOLCANO MEN!"

SKINNY OR FAT, 15, 20, 30 OR 40 YEARS OF AGE

Just RUSH me your LAST CHANCE COUPON below with YOUR NAME and ADDRESS ON IT

and I'll show YOU absolutely FREE

How to GAIN UP TO 50 LBS. OF MIGHTY MUSCLES!

or LOSE up to 50 LBS. of UGLY, DANGEROUS FAT

And Become a REAL HE-MAN like MANY THOUSANDS of My Pupils in 10 Minutes of FUN a Day

Are YOU SKINNY like I was?

a sickly skeleton who developed a streamlined physique and great physical endurance.

American Body building Club president

BEN REBHUHN

at 50 years of age. A brilliant UNIVERSITY EDUCATOR,

authority on creating a HEALTHY MIND in a HEALTHY BODY,

says Dr. Winfield Scott Pugh, Commander U.S. Navy Medical Corps.

Yes! I'll Show You By My Quick, Easy Methods How To

ADD POWERFUL NEW INCHES OF MUSCLES around YOUR ARMS, CHEST, LEGS, etc.

How to IMPROVE YOUR HE-MAN LOOKS 100%.

How to BECOME A WINNING ATHLETE IN ALL POPULAR SPORTS.

How to BEAT ANY BULLY.

How to DO FEATS of STRENGTH.

How to be a WINNER in EVERYTHING YOU TACKLE.

YES! Your Success Story Can Soon be like John Sill and thousands of my pupils. Think of it — a skinny weakling like you became a MAGNIFICENT MR. MUSCLES — won a BIG SILVER TROPHY, his name, accomplishments engraved on it and $100. A few weeks before, everybody picked on John, too weak to fight for his rights. TODAY everybody admires John's movie star build, he-man STRENGTH, his mighty ARMS, heroic CHEST, slender WAIST, rock-like TORSO, broad manly BACK, wide military SHOULDERS, new popularity with the BOYS and GIRLS. His winning drive in ALL SPORTS, his energy at work and studies.

NO! I don't care how skinny or flabby you are, if you are in your teens, twenties or thirties, I'll show you in just 10 thrilling minutes a day in your home, you can make yourself over by the easy, quick method I turned myself from a wreck to a tower of strength and endurance.

YES! YOU'LL ADD INCH upon INCH of MIGHTY MUSCLES to YOUR ARMS, YOU'LL DEEPEN YOUR CHEST, BROADEN YOUR BACK and SHOULDERS. From HEAD to HEELS you'll gain SIZE, POWER, LIGHTNING SPEED, ENDURANCE. You'll become the SUCCESSFUL HE-MAN IN LOOKS and ACTS — a WINNER in EVERYTHING, athletics, business, studies.

I GAINED 60 LBS. OF SHAPELY MIGHTY MUSCLES

This Can Be YOU in a Short Time!

BEFORE

Mailing Coupon I was a 125 lb. 6 ft. skinny weakling

says JOHN SILL

I added 7 inches to MY CHEST, 3½ INCHES to EACH ARM. No, Pal! You don't have to be a chicken-chested skinny weakling like I was only a few weeks ago.

AFTER

Mailing Coupon 185 lb. HEAD-TO-TOE HE-MAN POPULAR ATHLETE You can be, too!

This now MAGNIFICENT, MODERN HERCULES, 26 yr. old teacher, Wm. Butler,

says to YOU, "No matter WHAT your age, I advise you to SEND for the ABC WONDER PICTURE COURSES at once. Under the World's greatest home training BODY BUILDER I now have 18½" ARMS, a 52" CHEST, my STRENGTH has greatly improved. So have my sports. I have won titles like "Mr. Virginian," "Mr. State Y.M.C.A." etc.

How would YOU like to have 18½ inch ARMS, a 52 inch CHEST like this ABC pupil NOW HAS?

WIN A BIG Silver Trophy and $100 IN CASH

DEVELOP YOUR 520 MUSCLES BY THE GREATEST METHOD!

Friend, I traveled the world, studying every secret to PERFECTLY develop your body. My "5-Way Progressive Natural Power Method" is TESTED-PROVED by hundreds of thousands LIKE YOU! SAVE YEARS, hundreds of DOLLARS! Be as movie stars, champions — John Sill, Jim Norman, Tony Pascarella — did! Mail coupon NOW!

Pick the kind of BODY YOU WANT Check All Your Needs —

I BROKE A WORLD'S STRENGTH RECORD!

BEFORE

AFTER mailing coupon below— like you do NOW.

JIM NORMAN became Athlete of the Year. Lifted the front End of a 2780 lb. Car. Quit being a bag-of-bones weakling like I was. In 10 minutes of fun a day, A.B.C. CAN DO FOR YOU ALL HE DID FOR ME! I gained 25 TERRIFIC LBS. of HANDSOME POWER-PACKED MUSCLES.

MAIL THE COUPON TO ME NOW (before it is too late) as John Sill and the others did

and I'll Send You FREE these 5 AMAZING PICTURE-PACKED TEST COURSES

PLUS BOOK OF PHOTOS OF FAMOUS STRONG MEN ONCE WEAK LIKE YOU

MILLIONS were sold at $1.00. Send for them ALL FREE. Mail Coupon BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

AMERICAN BODY BUILDING CLUB, Dept. NC-28 GREAT NECK, NEW YORK

Mail me FREE all 5 WORLD FAMOUS STRENGTH TEST COURSES, including PHOTO BOOK of FAMOUS STRONG MEN, once weaklings, now famous Strong Men, and How to Become one of Them.

☐ I enclose 10c for mailing and handling.

I am under no other obligation.

I'm checking everything I need to give me the kind of body I want.

☐ I want to gain ..... lbs. (fill in). ☐ Triple my strength.

☐ I want to streamline my body, get rid of flabby fat.

☐ I want to add inches of muscle to my ☐ ARMS ☐ CHEST ☐ SHOULDERS ☐ POWERFUL LEGS ☐ SLIM WAIST

☐ I want to become a winning athlete. ☐ I want new pep.

NAME ..... AGE .....

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FREE Sports, Self-defense, Strong-man Stunts Courses Apparatus. Let me know how to get these FREE!

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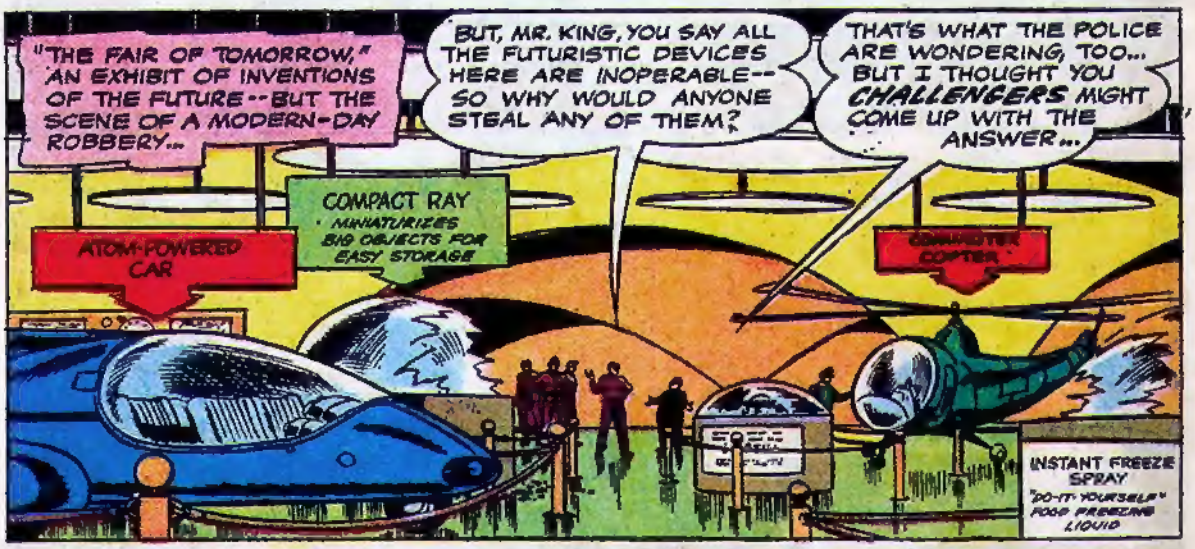
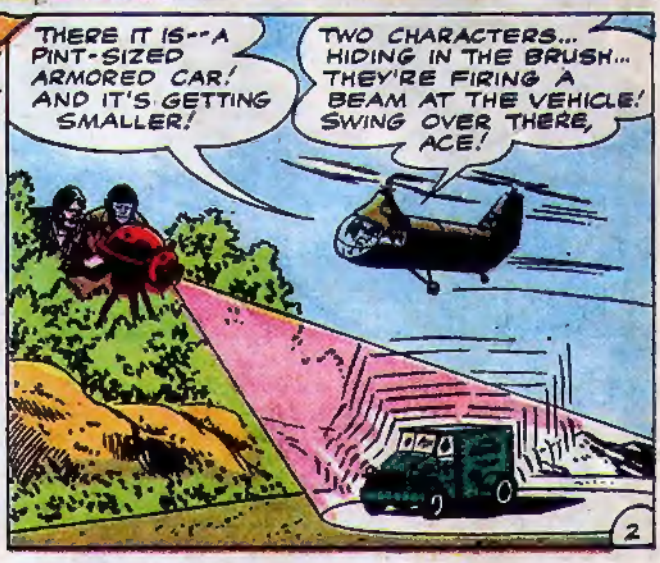

"THE FAIR OF TOMORROW," AN EXHIBIT OF INVENTIONS OF THE FUTURE--BUT THE SCENE OF A MODERN-DAY ROBBERY...
BUT, MR. KING, YOU SAY ALL THE FUTURISTIC DEVICES HERE ARE INOPERABLE--SO WHY WOULD ANYONE STEAL ANY OF THEM?
THAT'S WHAT THE POLICE ARE WONDERING, TOO... BUT I THOUGHT YOU CHALLENGERS MIGHT COME UP WITH THE ANSWER...
ATOM-POWERED CAR
COMPACT RAY
MINIATURIZES BIG OBJECTS FOR EASY STORAGE
CONVERTER COPTER
INSTANT FREEZE SPRAY
"DO-IT-YOURSELF" FOOD FREEZING LIQUID

SINCE YOU SPECIALIZE IN THE UNKNOWN... THE BIZARRE--
SARGE! A FANTASTIC BULLETIN JUST CAME OVER THE RADIO...

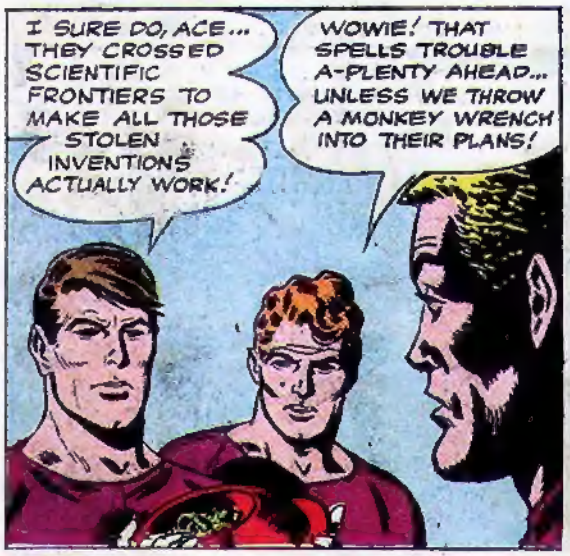
A COUPLE OF ARMORED CAR GUARDS REPORT THEIR VEHICLE IS SHRINKING AWAY ON HIGHWAY 6, NEAR SLATTERY BOULEVARD!
"SHRINKING!" THE STOLEN "COMPACT RAY"--HOW COULD ANYONE BE PUTTING IT TO USE?

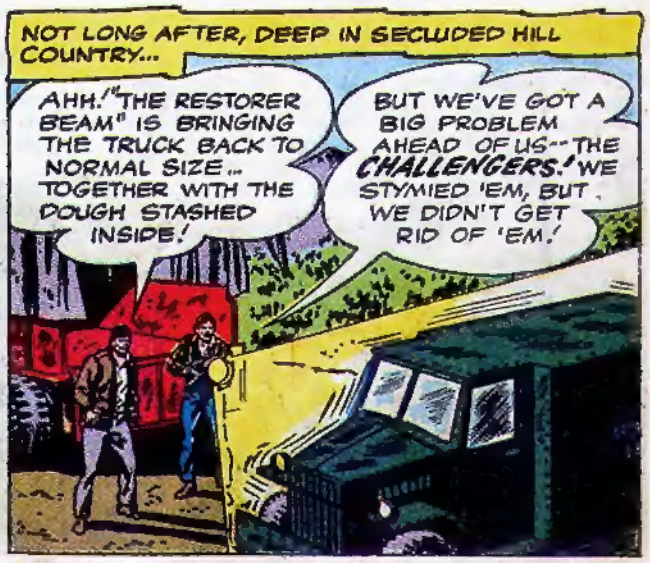
LET'S TAKE TO OUR WHIRLY-BIRD, MEN!
WE'RE ONLY A COPTER-HOP AWAY FROM THERE, ACE! WE'LL BE THERE IN NO NO TIME!

BUT AS THE CRACK CHALLENGER TEAM WHIRLS TO ITS DESTINATION, LITTLE DO ITS MEMBERS REALIZE THE WEIRD EVENTS THAT SOON WILL CONFRONT THEM...
PROF HALEY--RENOWNED DEEP-SEA DIVER
RED RYAN--CONQUEROR OF MIGHTY MOUNTAINS
ROCKY DAVIS--CHAMP WRESTLER
ACE MORGAN--FAMED JET PILOT


THERE IT IS--A PINT-SIZED ARMORED CAR! AND IT'S GETTING SMALLER!
TWO CHARACTERS... HIDING IN THE BRUSH... THEY'RE FIRING A BEAM AT THE VEHICLE! SWING OVER THERE, ACE!

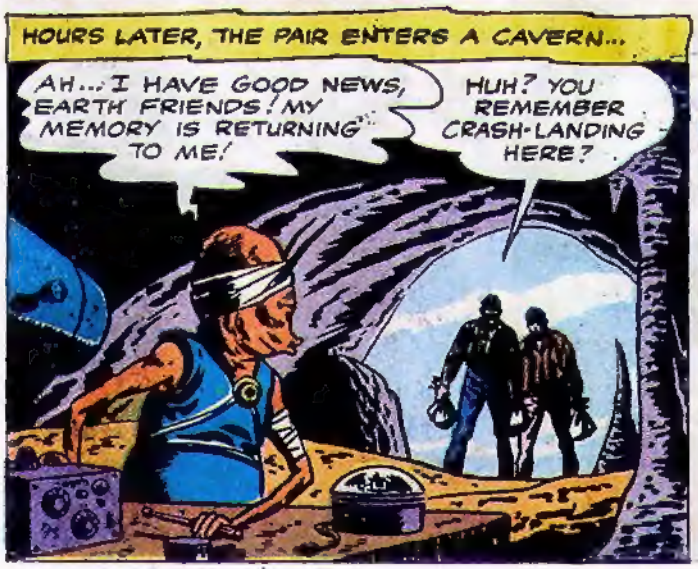
THAT MUST BE THE STOLEN "COMPACT RAY!" BUT HOW DID THEY GET IT TO WORK?
A COPTER-FULL OF TROUBLE'S COMIN' THIS WAY, LOWTHER! I RECOGNIZE THE SHIP! GET SET WITH THAT FREEZE RIFLE!
THEN, AS THE WHIRLYBIRD ROARS INTO RANGE...
BULL'S-EYE, GATES! SCRATCH FOUR CHALLENGERS!
WHOOSH
THE ENGINE'S CUT OUT... ALL THE CONTROLS ARE ICED! WE'RE FROZEN IN MID-AIR!
PARALYZED BY CAKING ICE, THE CRAFT PLUMMETS WITH ITS HUMAN CARGO...
KWHAM
WE REALLY PUT THOSE GUYS ON ICE! BUT A CHUNK SHATTERED THE "COMPACT RAY!"
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? WE REDUCED THE ARMORED CAR AND ITS CASH SHIPMENT! LET'S LOAD IT IN THE TRUCK AND SCRAM!
DAZED AND SHAKEN, THE CHALLENGERS STUMBLE FROM THEIR BATTERED CRAFT MOMENTS LATER...
WOW! THAT FREEZE SPRAY REALLY CLIPPED OUR WINGS! BUT HOW IN THUNDER ARE THOSE THUGS MAKING THOSE STOLEN DEVICES OPERABLE?
MAYBE I CAN ANSWER THAT, RED... AFTER I EXAMINE THE BROKEN "COMPACT RAY!"
SHORTLY AFTER...
ALL THE TUBES... AND SOME OF THE PARTS ARE OF UNKNOWN SUBSTANCES! SOMEHOW THOSE CRIMINALS CRACKED THROUGH THE SCIENCE BARRIER!
WHAT? DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, PROF?
3

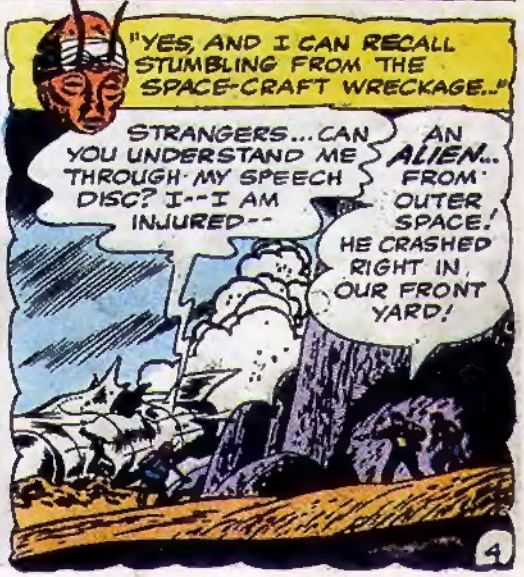

I SURE DO, ACE... THEY CROSSED SCIENTIFIC FRONTIERS TO MAKE ALL THOSE STOLEN INVENTIONS ACTUALLY WORK!
WOWIE! THAT SPELLS TROUBLE A-PLENTY AHEAD... UNLESS WE THROW A MONKEY WRENCH INTO THEIR PLANS!


NOT LONG AFTER, DEEP IN SECLUDED HILL COUNTRY...
AHH! "THE RESTORER BEAM" IS BRINGING THE TRUCK BACK TO NORMAL SIZE... TOGETHER WITH THE DOUGH STASHED INSIDE!
BUT WE'VE GOT A BIG PROBLEM AHEAD OF US--THE CHALLENGERS! WE STYMIED 'EM, BUT WE DIDN'T GET RID OF 'EM!

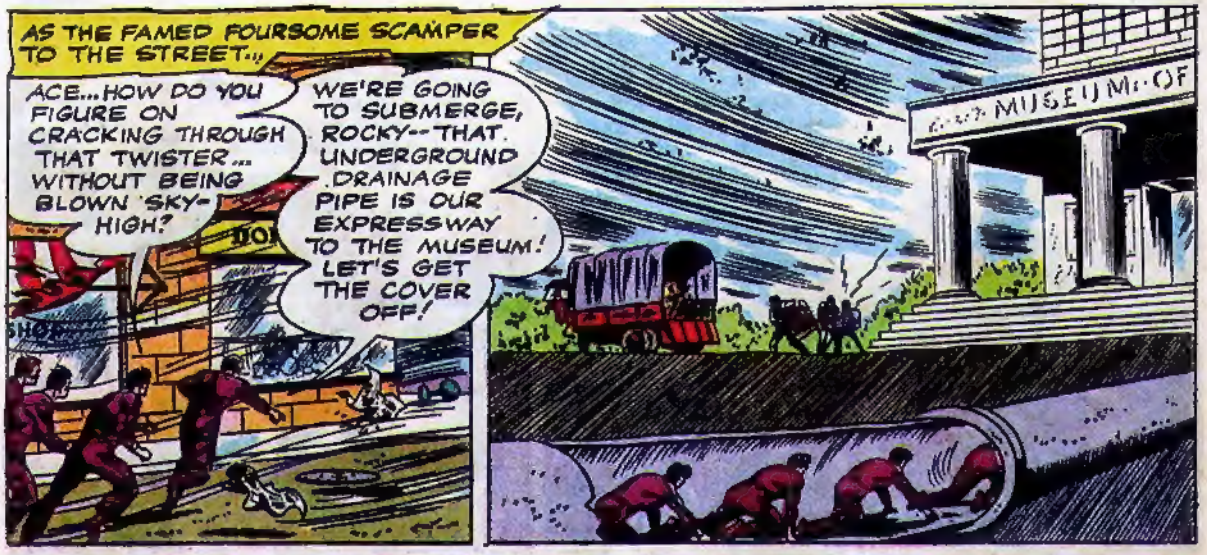
YEAH... THEY COULD SURE BOTCH THINGS UP FOR US! ANY IDEA ON HOW WE CAN TAKE CARE OF 'EM?
IT'S OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT, LOWTHER? OUR SPACE PAL SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH A GIMMICK!

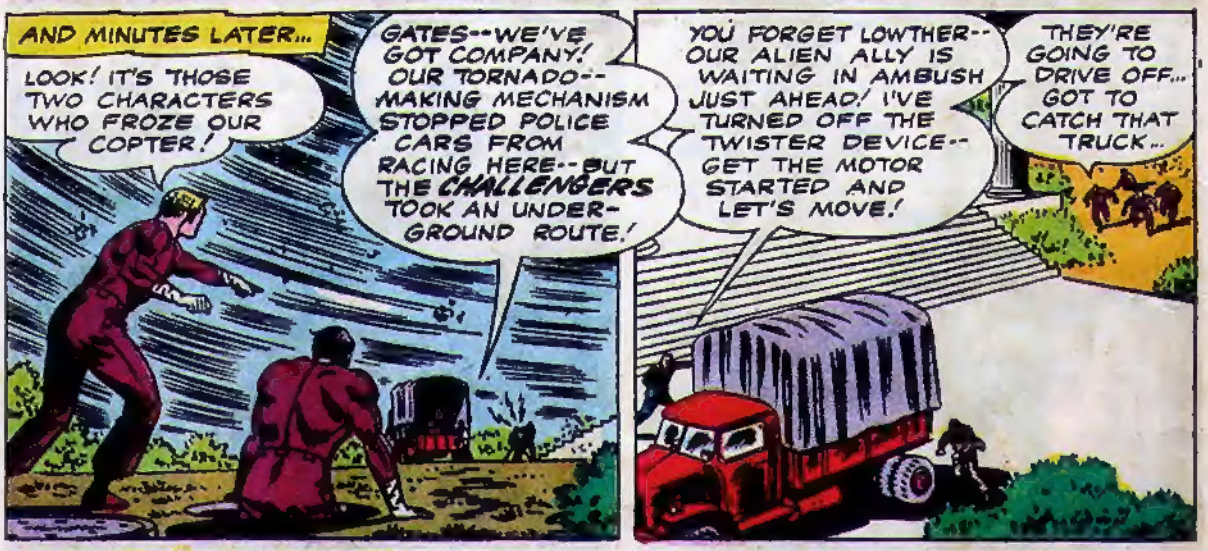
KLEEG? BUT HE FIGURES US FOR A COUPLE OF HONEST CHARACTERS! HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TRICK HIM INTO SCUTTLING THE CHALLENGERS?
WE FOOLED HIM ONCE... WE CAN DO IT AGAIN! C'MON... LET'S GET BACK TO THE HIDEOUT!

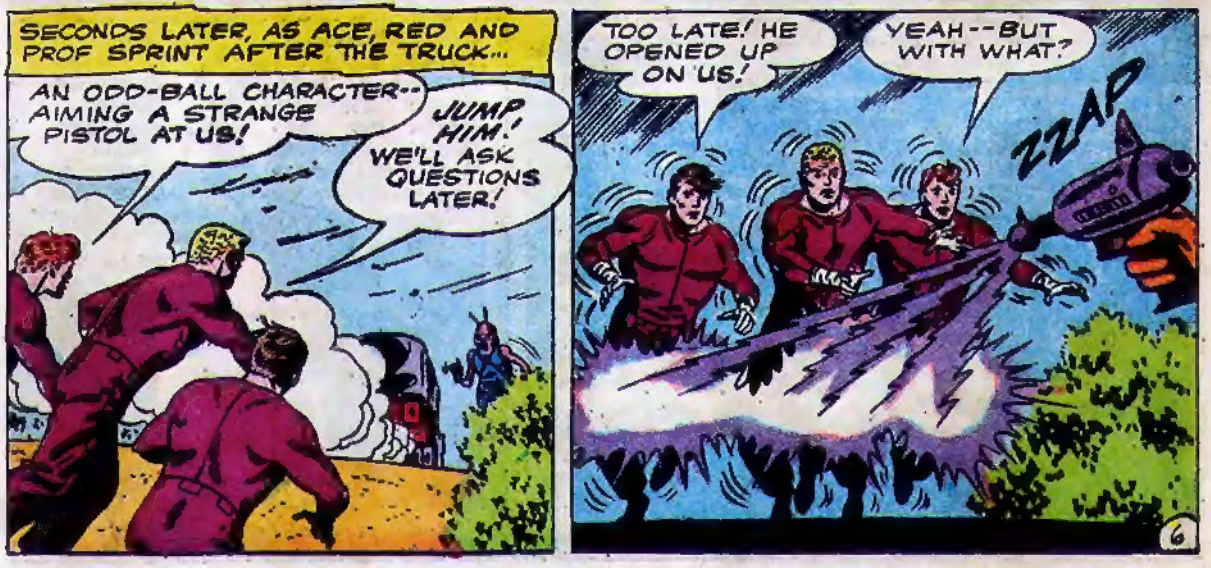

HOURS LATER, THE PAIR ENTERS A CAVERN...
AH... I HAVE GOOD NEWS, EARTH FRIENDS! MY MEMORY IS RETURNING TO ME!
HUH? YOU REMEMBER CRASH-LANDING HERE?

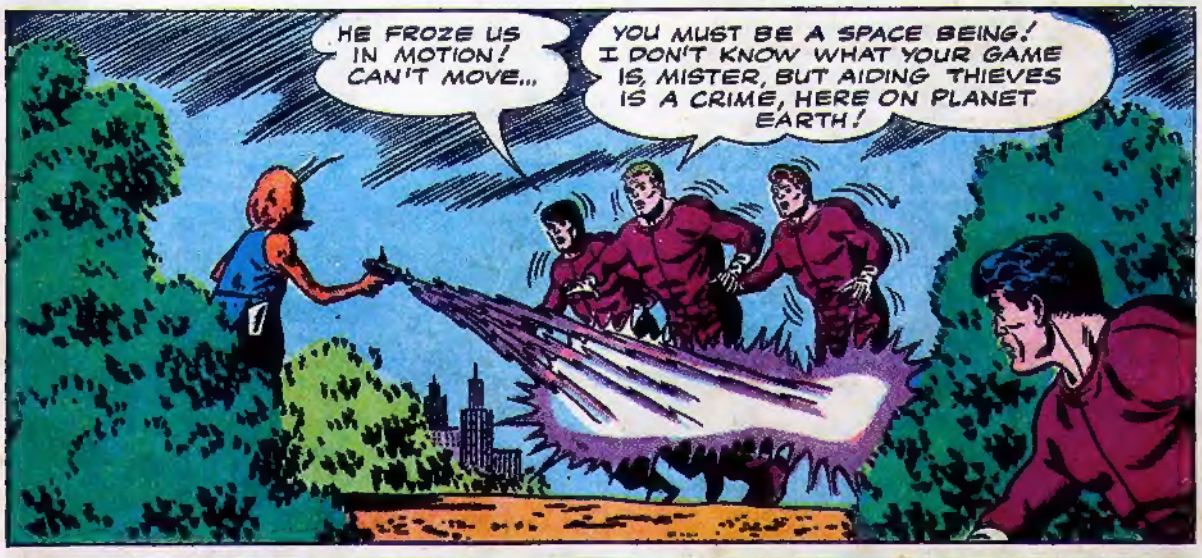

"YES, AND I CAN RECALL STUMBLING FROM THE SPACE-CRAFT WRECKAGE..."
STRANGERS... CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME THROUGH MY SPEECH DISC? I--I AM INJURED--
AN ALIEN... FROM OUTER SPACE! HE CRASHED RIGHT IN OUR FRONT YARD!

I RECALL YOUR TENDING MY WOUNDS... AND LATER REMOVING MY LABORATORY EQUIPMENT FROM THE SPACESHIP WRECKAGE!
YEAH, WE WANTED TO SEE IF YOU COULD MAKE THOSE EARTH INVENTIONS WORK! WE THOUGHT YOU'D GET A KICK OUT OF IT! NOW THAT YOU'RE BETTER, MAYBE YOU CAN HELP US, KLEEG...
YOU SEE, WE HAVE TO HIDE OUT HERE BECAUSE THERE'S A GROUP OF CRIMINALS, KNOWN AS THE CHALLENGERS, AFTER US--
BUT WHY SHOULD CRIMINALS THREATEN YOU?
OUR TESTIMONY ONCE SENT THEM TO PRISON, AND THEY SWORE THEY'D GET REVENGE WHEN THEY WERE RELEASED! IF WE ONLY HAD A WEAPON TO PROTECT US--!
SO THAT IS ALL YOU NEED? I SHALL SET TO WORK IMMEDIATELY! BUT WHEN IT IS COMPLETED, I MUST BE PRESENT TO OPERATE THE WEAPON!
IT WAS A CINCH, GATES!
AND HE INSISTED ON BUMPING OFF THE CHALLENGERS HIMSELF! -HA, HA!-
SEVERAL DAYS LATER, A FREAK TORNADO SUDDENLY APPEARS...
IN ALL MY YEARS AS A WEATHER OBSERVER, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT--!
YES...THE TWISTER'S ABSOLUTELY STANDING STILL...ITS CALM EYE--THE CENTER OF THE STORM--IS DIRECTLY OVER THE MUSEUM...
THE ART MUSEUM--IT'S BEING PICKED CLEAN BY THIEVES! ONE OF THE GUARDS MANAGED TO PHONE BEFORE THEY SLUGGED HIM!
A MAD-CAP TORNADO HOVERING OVER A MUSEUM BEING LOOTED! THAT'S A REAL WEIRDY THAT NEEDS LOOKING INTO!

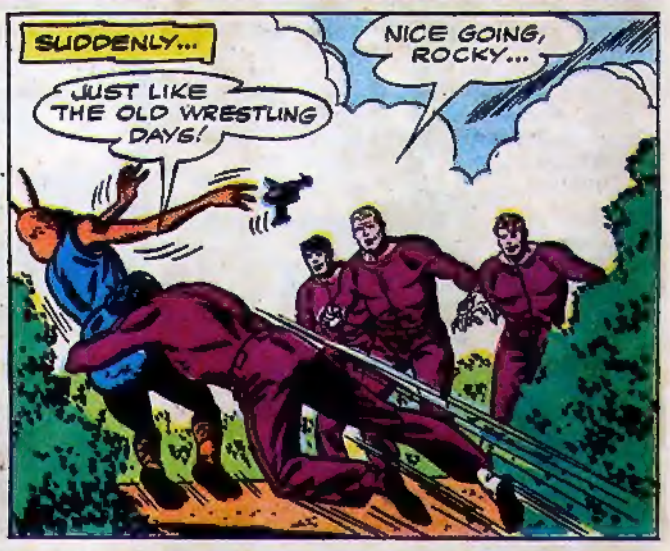

AS THE FAMED FOURSOME SCAMPER TO THE STREET...
ACE...HOW DO YOU FIGURE ON CRACKING THROUGH THAT TWISTER... WITHOUT BEING BLOWN SKY-HIGH?
WE'RE GOING TO SUBMERGE, ROCKY--THAT UNDERGROUND DRAINAGE PIPE IS OUR EXPRESSWAY TO THE MUSEUM! LET'S GET THE COVER OFF!
MUSEUM OF

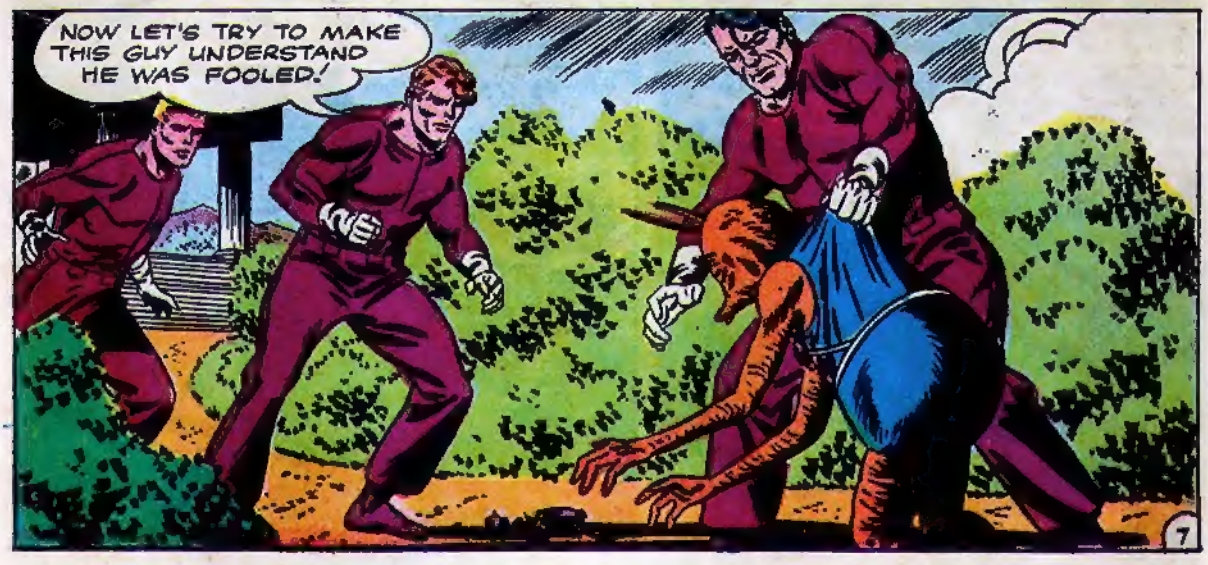

AND MINUTES LATER...
LOOK! IT'S THOSE TWO CHARACTERS WHO FROZE OUR COPTER!
GATES--WE'VE GOT COMPANY! OUR TORNADO--MAKING MECHANISM STOPPED POLICE CARS FROM RACING HERE--BUT THE CHALLENGERS TOOK AN UNDERGROUND ROUTE!
YOU FORGET LOWTHER--OUR ALIEN ALLY IS WAITING IN AMBUSH JUST AHEAD! I'VE TURNED OFF THE TWISTER DEVICE--GET THE MOTOR STARTED AND LET'S MOVE!
THEY'RE GOING TO DRIVE OFF... GOT TO CATCH THAT TRUCK...


SECONDS LATER, AS ACE, RED AND PROF SPRINT AFTER THE TRUCK...
AN ODD-BALL CHARACTER--AIMING A STRANGE PISTOL AT US!
JUMP HIM! WE'LL ASK QUESTIONS LATER!
TOO LATE! HE OPENED UP ON US!
YEAH--BUT WITH WHAT?
ZZAP


HE FROZE US IN MOTION! CAN'T MOVE...
YOU MUST BE A SPACE BEING! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, MISTER, BUT AIDING THIEVES IS A CRIME, HERE ON PLANET EARTH!

BUT I WAS TOLD THAT YOU WERE THE CRIMINALS!
HUH? SOMEONE WAS KIDDING YOU! YOUR TWO PALS ARE WANTED BY THE POLICE!


SUDDENLY...
NICE GOING, ROCKY...
JUST LIKE THE OLD WRESTLING DAYS!

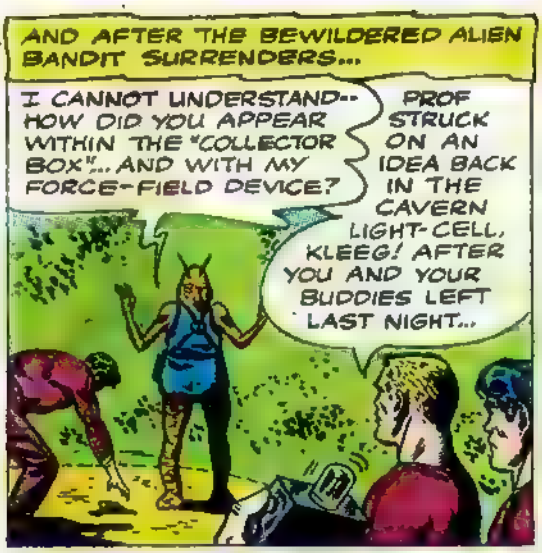

NOW LET'S TRY TO MAKE THIS GUY UNDERSTAND HE WAS FOOLED!

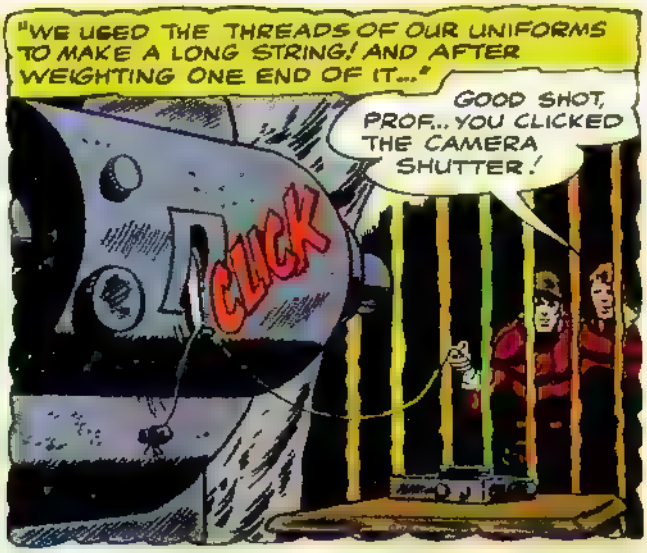
AFTER THE CHALLENGERS EXPLAIN...
GATES AND LOWTHER...THEY USED ME... TRICKED ME INTO MAKING THOSE STOLEN INVENTIONS WORK!
THEY REALIZED THAT SINCE YOU CAME FROM AN ADVANCED CIVILIZATION, YOU PROBABLY POSSESSED THE TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW TO COMPLETE THOSE DEVICES!
YES--AND I SUCCEEDED IN MAKING THOSE TWO MEN INTO SUPER EARTH CRIMINALS!
DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, FELLER--YOU WERE DUPED! BUT IF YOU COOPERATE WITH US, GATES AND LOWTHER MIGHT STILL BE PUT BEHIND BARS!
I WILL DO YOUR BIDDING... ANYTHING TO CORRECT MY BLUNDER! COMMAND ME, CHALLENGER FRIENDS!
GOOD! TAKE US TO THEIR HIDE-OUT, KLEEG--WE'LL TRY TO CORNER THEM THERE BEFORE THEY PULL ANOTHER JOB!
HOURS LATER, DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS...
SO THEY'RE HOLED UP IN THERE, HUH? NOW ALL WE'VE GOT TO DO IS SLIP INSIDE--
WAIT! LET ME HELP. GATES AND LOWTHER STILL BELIEVE THAT I AM ON THEIR SIDE!
KLEEG'S RIGHT, BOYS! HE CAN WALK RIGHT IN AND GET THE DROP ON THAT PAIR BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED!
WAIT HERE! I SHALL RETURN WITH THE CULPRITS!
THE CHALLENGERS WAIT IN TENSE ANTICIPATION, UNTIL FINALLY...
THERE HE COMES--WITH HIS TWO PRISONERS!
YAHOO! LET'S GET UP THERE!

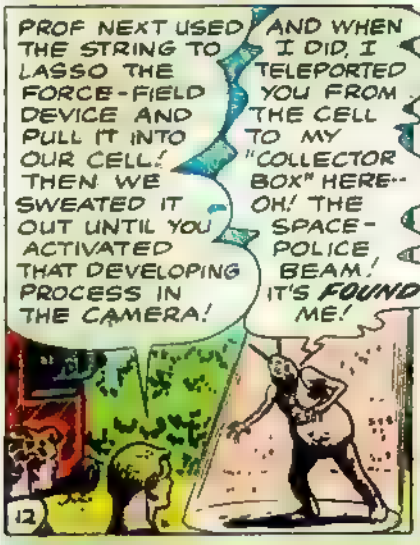
BUT AS THE CHALLENGERS BOLT FORWARD...
GATES, LOWTHER-- DON YOUR GLASSES! I AM THROWING MY SPHERE!
KLEEG DOUBLECROSSED US! RUSH HIM!
BUT BEFORE THE FOURSOME CAN GET VERY FAR...
THOSE LIGHTS... SO BRILLIANT...
CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF THOSE COLORS...
THERE IS NO NEED FOR THOSE HANDCUFFS! THE BRILLIANCE OF MY COLOR-HYPNOSIS BOMB HAS OVER-POWERED THEM!
HEY, THAT'S TERRIFIC! WE'LL HAVE TO USE THEM ON A JOB SOMETIME!
LATER THAT NIGHT, AS THE CHALLENGERS REGAIN THEIR SENSES WITHIN A BIZARRE PRISON...
YOU SEE, I AM, ACTUALLY, A SPACE CRIMINAL, CHALLENGERS! WHEN I CRASH-LANDED HERE, I QUITE NATURALLY KEPT IT... ER... A SECRET, AS DID GATES AND LOWTHER!
AND WHEN WE MADE UP THAT STORY ABOUT YOU GUYS BEING CRIMINALS, HE WANTED TO JOIN YOU! SOME TWIST, HUH?
9

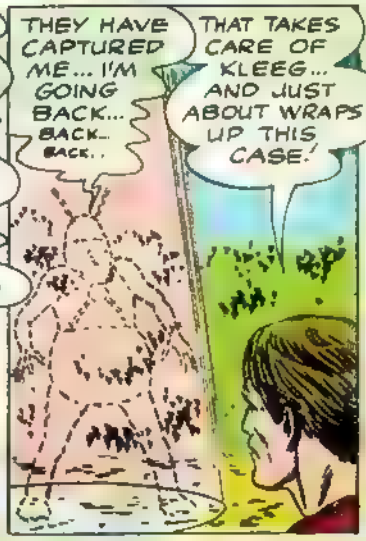
I VERY NEARLY REVEALED MYSELF WHILE YOU WERE IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION...
BUT WHEN WE TAGGED GATES AND LOWTHER AS CRIMINALS, YOU CLAMMED UP! WELL, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO RIGHT NOW IN THIS FANTASTIC SPACE PRISON--
THAT IS CORRECT! WITH YOU FOUR AS HOSTAGES, THERE IS NO LIMIT TO OUR CRIME POTENTIAL HERE! LET US GET STARTED, GATES... LOWTHER..
YOU'RE THE BOSS, KLEEG!
LATER THAT NIGHT, AS KLEEG BRIEFS HIS TWO CRONIES...
YOU MEAN TO SAY ANYTHING YOU PHOTOGRAPH WITH "THE CAPTIVE SPACE CAMERA" MATERIALIZES INSIDE THAT LARGE BOX?
CORRECT! ONCE THE PHOTOGRAPH IS TAKEN, I SIMPLY ACTIVATE THE DEVELOPER AND, WITHIN SECONDS, THE PHOTOGRAPHED OBJECT IS TELEPORTED INTO THE "COLLECTOR BOX!"
OUR UNIQUE EARTH-SPACE CRIME TEAM WILL RESUME ACTIVITY IN THE MORNING, GENTLEMEN! LET US GET SOME REST!
BOYS... I THINK I'VE COME UP WITH AN ESCAPE PLAN! IT'S A LONG SHOT... BUT IT'S WORTH A TRY!
NEXT DAY, AFTER THE BIZARRE BANDIT HAS SET UP HIS EQUIPMENT ON THE FRINGES OF AN AIRFIELD...
HOW YOU DOING, KLEEG?
I'M ABOUT TO TAKE A TELEPORTATION PICTURE OF A DOLLY LOADED WITH THE VALUABLE EARTH MINERAL!
HE TOOK A PICTURE OF THAT GOLD BULLION! LET'S SEE IF IT'S IN THE BOX...
DO NOT BE IMPATIENT, GENTLEMEN! THE FILM MUST FIRST GO THROUGH A BRIEF DEVELOPING PROCESS BEFORE THE PHOTOGRAPHED OBJECT IS TELEPORTED!

AND SECONDS LATER...
ARE YOU SURE THE GOLD'S GONNA BE INSIDE?
SEE FOR YOURSELVES!
BUT AS GATES ANXIOUSLY SWINGS OPEN THE DOOR...
WHOOMP
POW
EARTHLINGS INSIDE THE BOX! BUT... HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
LET'S TAKE THAT SPACE CHARACTER, BOYS!
THE CHALLENGERS! IT IS TIME I ELIMINATED THEM PERMANENTLY!
PROF-- THAT GADGET YOU TOOK BACK AT THE CAVERN! USE IT-- AND IT'D BETTER WORK!
HERE GOES, ACE!
THE INFURIATED ALIEN TRIGGERS HIS WEAPON... BUT TO HIS ASTONISHMENT...
MY FORCE-FIELD INSTRUMENT! YOU KNEW HOW TO OPERATE IT!
KAZAP
ZAP
ZAP
GIVE UP, KLEEG--THROW DOWN YOUR USELESS WEAPON, OR WE'LL KEEP YOU LOCKED IN THERE!









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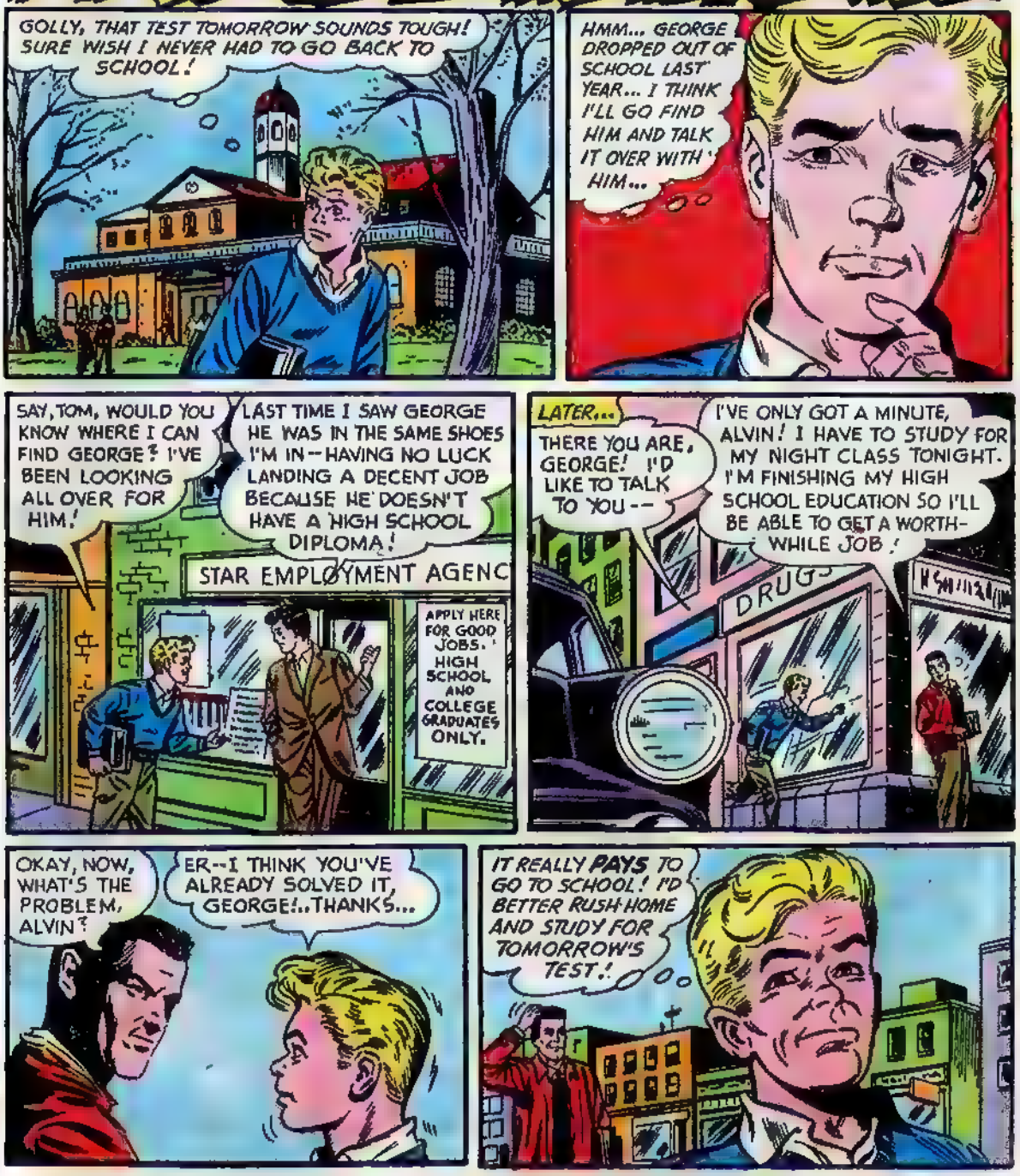
IN THIS SENSATIONAL ALBUM OF HER GREATEST ADVENTURES! SELECTED FROM HUNDREDS OF STORIES PUBLISHED DURING THE LAST DECADE! YOU'LL FIND THEM RE-ENACTED IN THE *First*...

SUPERMAN DC NATIONAL COMICS

GIANT LOIS LANE ANNUAL

ON SALE EVERYWHERE ... JUNE 7th

NOT WANTED: HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS!



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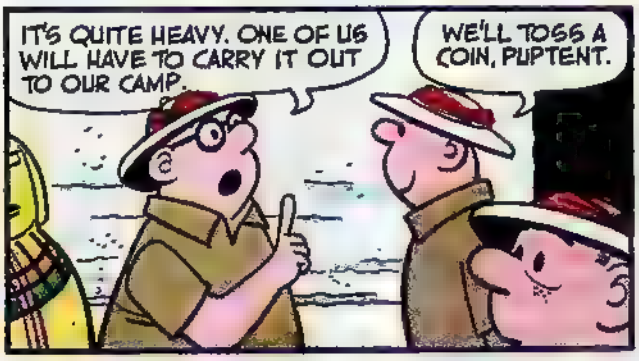

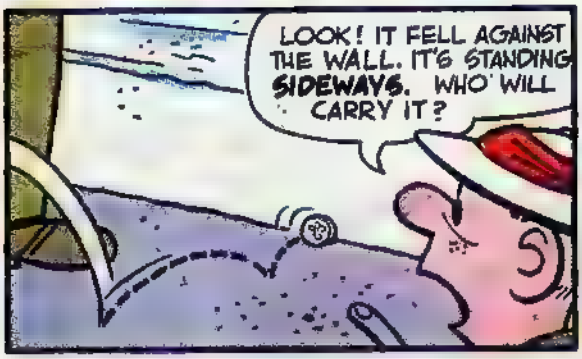

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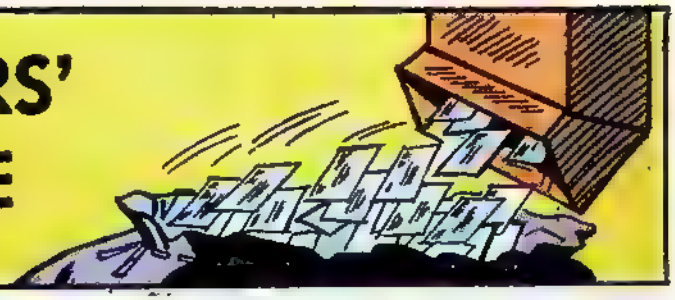


BEGINNING with the next issue, this space will be devoted exclusively to letters in response to an overwhelming demand by you readers. In the meantime, while awaiting your pats-on-the-back and pans, we'll kick off this column with abbreviated biographies of the men who have helped to make *Challengers of the Unknown* the topflight feature that it is. The man behind the drawing board is William Robert (Bob) Brown, also the creator of *Space Ranger*, the lead character in *UNEXPECTED* Comics. In reply to our query, Bob submitted the following crisp self-portrait:

Born into show business family, onstage at age of 12 . . . after high school graduation did dancing with sister (like Fred Astaire). . . . By summer of 1941 had two good offers: a Broadway musical and a 20th Century-Fox screen test, but Uncle Sam was breathing down my neck, so . . .

Sept. 1941: Enlisted Army Air Corps. *Nov.:* School at Scott Field, Ill. *Dec.:* Took and passed Aviation Cadet Exam. *Jan. 1942:* Began pilot training at Kelly Field, Tex., continued at Chickasha, Okla., Waco, Tex. *July:* Crashed in Vultee BT-14 trainer (450 h.p.) while on solo flight near Waco. This failed to impress the Operations Officer, and I was recommended for bombardier training. *September:* Big Spring Bombardier School, Tex. *Jan. 1943:* Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, assigned to Navigation School, Hondo, Tex. *February:* Married Nurse Dorothy Hale. *June:* Graduated at Hondo, additional MOS as navigator, shipped to San Angelo, Tex., to teach navigation to bombardier cadets. *Feb. 1944:* Promoted to 1st Lieutenant, assigned to 499th Bomb Group (B-29s) as Navigator-Bombardier, took combat training at Salina, Kan.

Nov. 1944: Overseas to Saipan with 877th Bomb Squadron, 499th Group, 73rd Wing, 20th Air Force. *Thanksgiving Day:* Navigated lead plane 499th Group on first B-29 high altitude attack. Target: Mushashino Aircraft Engine factory, Tokyo; distance 3,000 miles round-trip all over water. *Feb. 1945:* Promoted to captain, assigned Squadron Navigation Staff Officer. *March:* Made first four fire-bomb raids on Japan; attacks made at low altitude by individual aircraft at night; anti-aircraft fire intense; sorties made four nights in a row without sleep. *August:* Finished 35 required missions, having collected six Air Medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross. *December:* Honorable discharge; began comics illustrations while studying at Hartford art school; got staff job and moved family to New York. *Jan. 1950:* Went to work for DC.

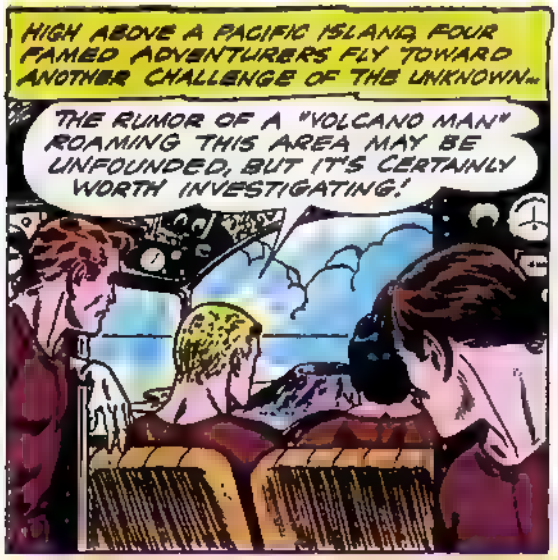
May, 1953: Recalled to active duty as navigator, 53rd Air Rescue Squadron, Newfoundland; flew rescue search and escort missions in North Atlantic and Arctic; logged 2,000 flying hours. *May, 1954:* Honorable discharge and back to DC. *Dec. 1957:* Interested in amateur radio, took exams, received license as General Class operator, call letters K2JHW; operate on 10 meter phone (between 29.3 and 29.6 megacycles) and on 40 meter CW (between 7.05 and 7.15 mc.); would like to contact any readers who are ham operators.

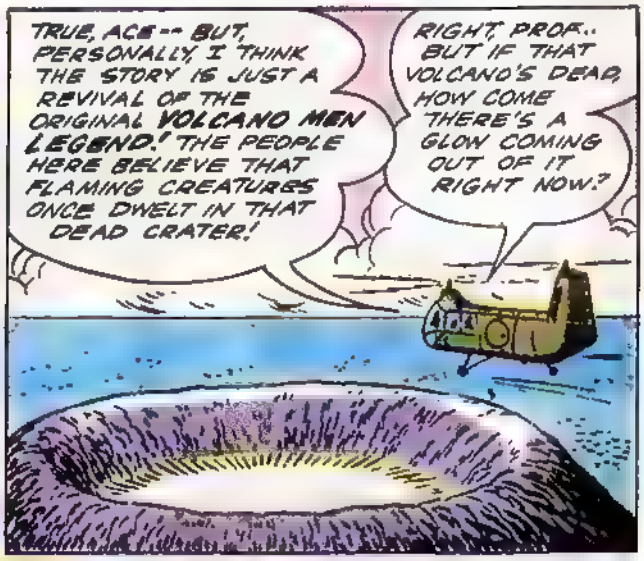
Arnold Drake, who scripted *Master of the Volcano Men*, also is adept with radio dials. As a high-speed radio operator in an armored vehicle of Gen. Patton's Third Army, he sent this message to begin the vital crossing of the Inn River in Austria: *"Come on Inn, fellers; the water's fine."* A radio, TV, magazine and short story scripter, Drake recently completed writing and co-producing a motion picture which soon will flash across the nation's screens. His versatility in writing is evident in the different types of stories he has created for other DC magazines.

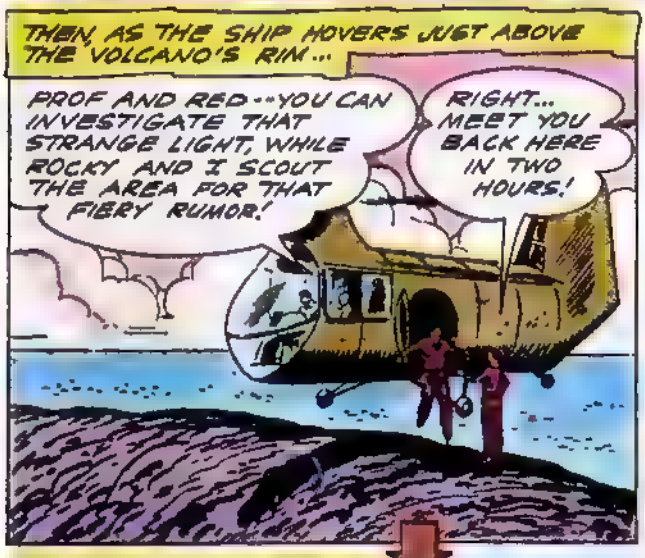
* * *

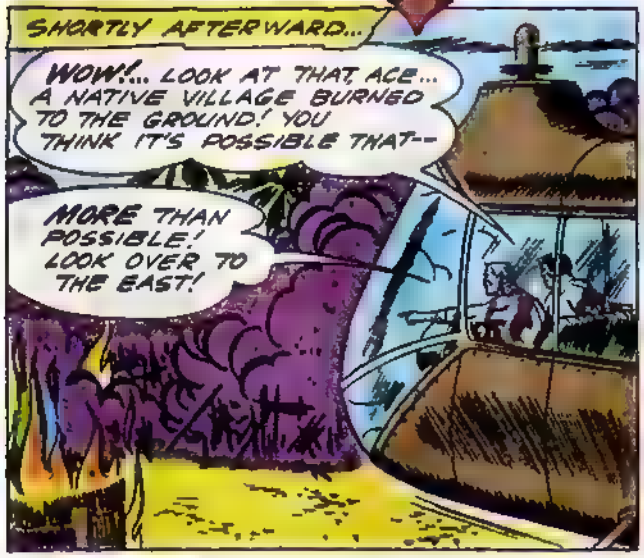
Now that you've heard from us, reader, let's hear from you. Address all correspondence to: *The Editor, Challengers of the Unknown, National Periodical Publications, 575 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.*

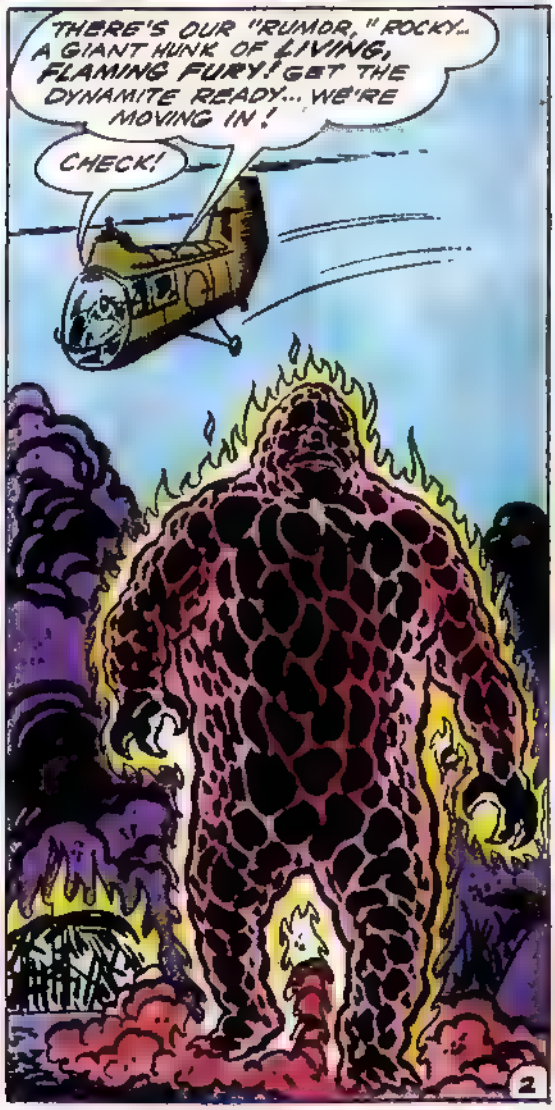
LIKE SOME SPAWN OF A BUBBLING WITCH'S CAULDRON, THE FIERY THINGS CAME FORTH FROM THE EARTH! MOLTEN ROCK WAS THEIR SUBSTANCE, AND AN UNTAPPED FORCE OF NATURE THEIR ENERGY! ONLY ONE MAN KNEW THEIR FLAMING SECRET-- THE ONE WHO VOWED HE WOULD BE...
MASTER OF THE VOLCANO MEN
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
GOOD GRIEF! THAT THING COMING OUT OF THE EARTH...IT-- IT CAN'T BE!
BUT IT IS, DOCTOR-- A GIANT VOLCANO BEING... AND EVEN YOU CAN'T CONTROL THAT ONE!


HIGH ABOVE A PACIFIC ISLAND, FOUR FAMED ADVENTURERS FLY TOWARD ANOTHER CHALLENGE OF THE UNKNOWN...
THE RUMOR OF A "VOLCANO MAN" ROAMING THIS AREA MAY BE UNFOUNDED, BUT IT'S CERTAINLY WORTH INVESTIGATING!

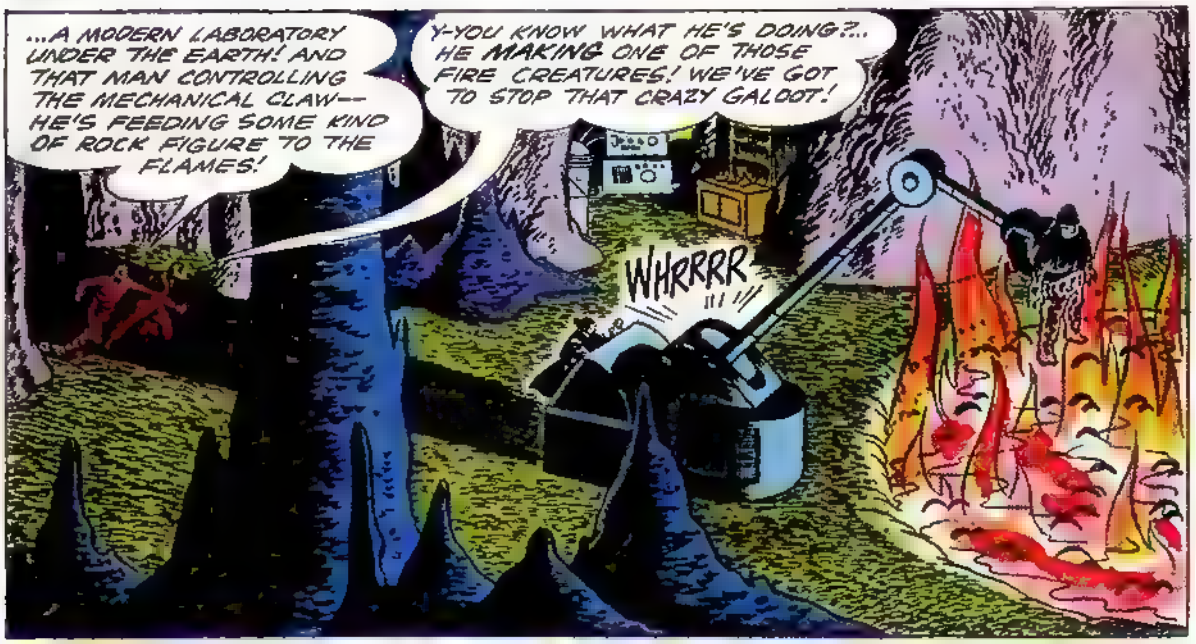

TRUE, ACE -- BUT, PERSONALLY, I THINK THE STORY IS JUST A REVIVAL OF THE ORIGINAL VOLCANO MEN LEGEND! THE PEOPLE HERE BELIEVE THAT FLAMING CREATURES ONCE DWELT IN THAT DEAD CRATER!
RIGHT, PROF.. BUT IF THAT VOLCANO'S DEAD, HOW COME THERE'S A GLOW COMING OUT OF IT RIGHT NOW?


THEN, AS THE SHIP HOVERS JUST ABOVE THE VOLCANO'S RIM...
PROF AND RED -- YOU CAN INVESTIGATE THAT STRANGE LIGHT, WHILE ROCKY AND I SCOUT THE AREA FOR THAT FIERY RUMOR!
RIGHT... MEET YOU BACK HERE IN TWO HOURS!


SHORTLY AFTERWARD...
WOW!... LOOK AT THAT, ACE... A NATIVE VILLAGE BURNED TO THE GROUND! YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE THAT--
MORE THAN POSSIBLE! LOOK OVER TO THE EAST!

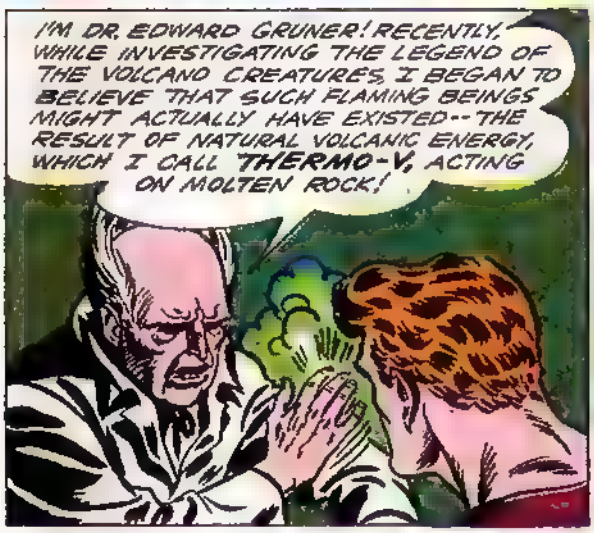

THERE'S OUR "RUMOR," ROCKY... A GIANT HUNK OF LIVING, FLAMING FURY! GET THE DYNAMITE READY... WE'RE MOVING IN!
CHECK!

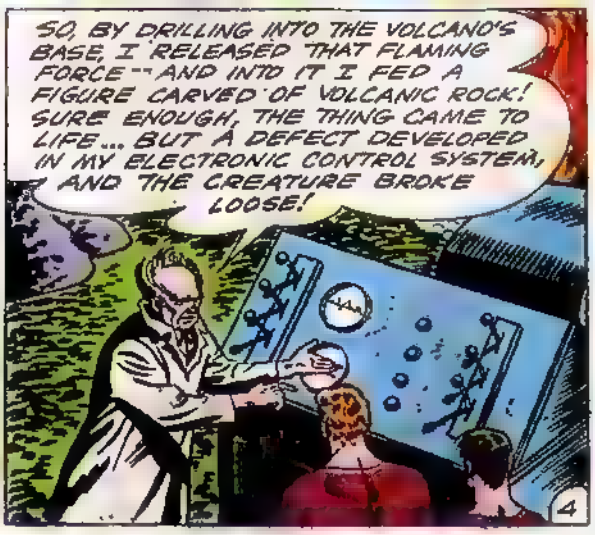
QUICKLY, ROCKY FASHIONS A CRUDE BOMB-- AND AS THE HELICOPTER ZOOMS IN...
GET READY TO TAKE THE SHIP UP PRONTO, ACE, 'CAUSE THIS IS ONE BIG FIRE-CRACKER I'M GONNA TOSS!
BULL'S-EYE!
BAROOM
BUT A MOMENT LATER...
GREAT GLORY! THE BLAST DIDN'T DESTROY THAT THING...IT SPLIT IT INTO TWO FLAMING MENACES!
WE'VE GOT TO LAND AND STOP THEM, ROCKY, BEFORE THEY REACH THE CAPITAL!
MEANWHILE, DEEP WITHIN THE STRANGE VOLCANO...
I THINK WE FOUND THE RIGHT TUNNEL THIS TIME, RED...THAT WEIRD GLOW IS GETTING BRIGHTER!
AS THEY TURN THE CORNER OF THE NATURAL CORRIDOR...
WHRRRRRR
LISTEN...THAT SOUNDS LIKE A MOTOR, COMING FROM-- GOOD NIGHT!... GET A LOAD OF THAT, RED!
FANTASTIC...


...A MODERN LABORATORY UNDER THE EARTH! AND THAT MAN CONTROLLING THE MECHANICAL CLAW— HE'S FEEDING SOME KIND OF ROCK FIGURE TO THE FLAMES!
Y-YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING?... HE MAKING ONE OF THOSE FIRE CREATURES! WE'VE GOT TO STOP THAT CRAZY GALOOT!
WHRRRR

OOF! WAIT, YOU FOOL! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

OKAY, I SWUNG THAT ROCK MONSTER OUT OF THE FLAMES!
BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! LET ME UP... I MUST FINISH CREATING THAT THING! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID CERTAIN DISASTER!

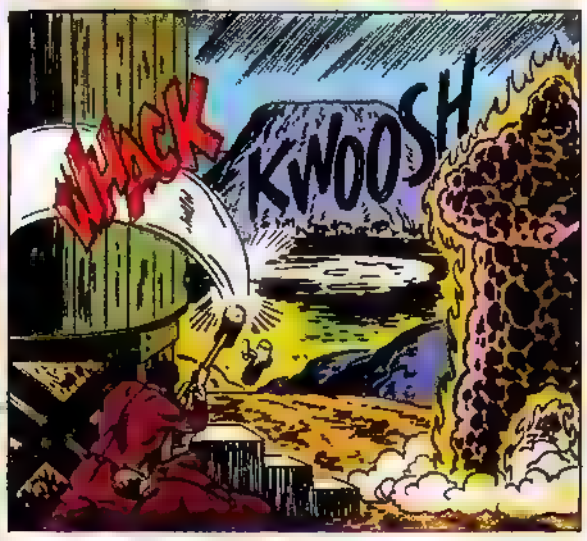

I'M DR. EDWARD GRUNER! RECENTLY, WHILE INVESTIGATING THE LEGEND OF THE VOLCANO CREATURES, I BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH FLAMING BEINGS MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE EXISTED -- THE RESULT OF NATURAL VOLCANIC ENERGY, WHICH I CALL THERMO-V, ACTING ON MOLTEN ROCK!


SO, BY DRILLING INTO THE VOLCANO'S BASE, I RELEASED THAT FLAMING FORCE -- AND INTO IT I FED A FIGURE CARVED OF VOLCANIC ROCK! SURE ENOUGH, THE THING CAME TO LIFE... BUT A DEFECT DEVELOPED IN MY ELECTRONIC CONTROL SYSTEM, AND THE CREATURE BROKE LOOSE!

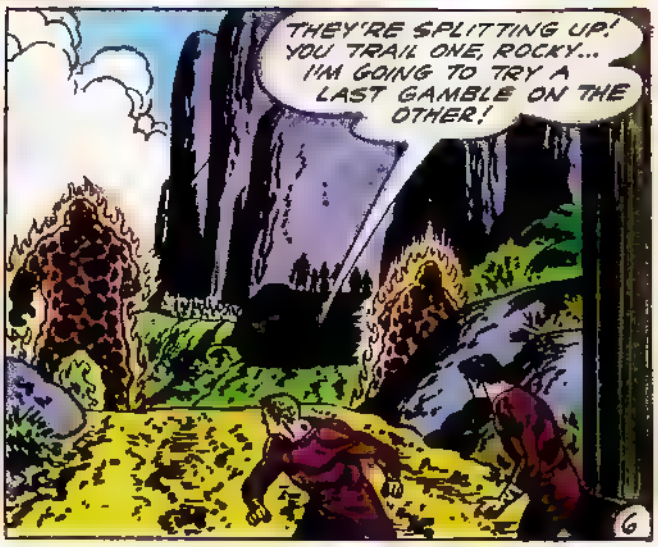
I'VE REPAIRED THE CONTROLS, BUT TO BE SURE THEY'D WORK, I HAD TO CREATE ANOTHER FLAME CREATURE TO TEST THEM ON!
AND THAT'S WHEN WE INTERRUPTED YOU? OKAY, DR GRUNER, FINISH. CREATING THAT THING -- ONLY BE CAREFUL!
AS THE SCIENTIST RAISES THE ROCK FIGURE FROM THE EERIE INFERNO...
GREAT GLORY! THE THING EXPANDED TO TWICE ITS SIZE, AND -- LOOK!... IT'S ALIVE!
SUCCESS! NOW IF I CAN MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER IT...
AT HIS ELECTRONIC COMPLEX, GRUNER SENDS OUT A SERIES OF SWIFT RADIO SIGNALS..
BEEP-BEEP
I'M "COMMANDING" IT TO RAISE ITS ARMS UPWARD!
IT'S DOING JUST THAT! GREAT!.. NOW, USE THOSE CONTROLS TO BRING BACK THE OTHER CREATURE!
HA, HA! NOT BEFORE I PUT YOU TWO MEDDLERS OUT OF THE WAY -- BY SIGNALING MY FLAMING FURY TO IMPRISON YOU!
OH, NO!.. WE'VE BEEN DOUBLE-CROSSED, PROF!

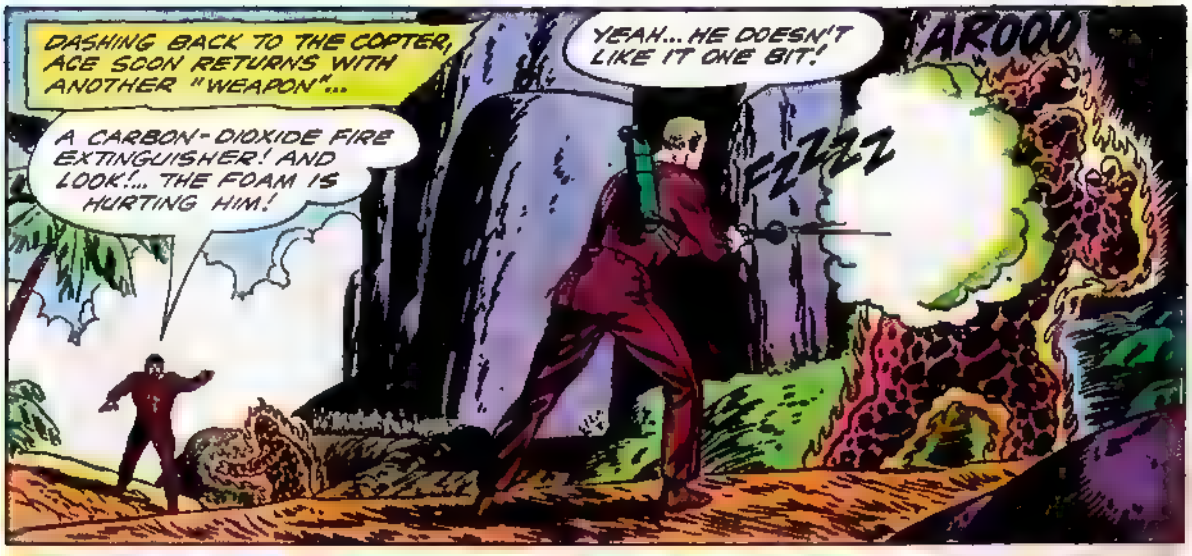
AT THIS VERY MOMENT, NOT FAR AWAY...
THE ROAD IS CLOGGED WITH REFUGEES FROM THE BURNT-OUT VILLAGE! THEY'VE STOPPED FOR WATER--BUT THOSE FLAME CREATURES AREN'T FAR OFF... WE MUST KEEP THOSE PEOPLE MOVING!
ROGER!.. AND THAT WOODEN WATER TANK MIGHT GIVE US A WEAPON AGAINST THE CREATURES, TOO!

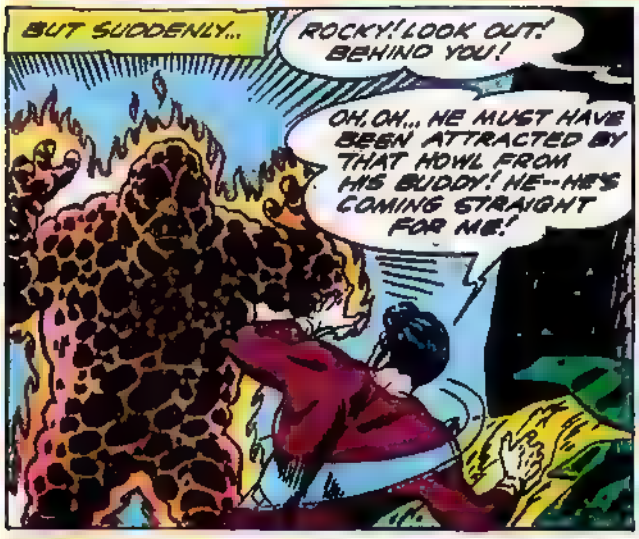
GENTLY, BUT FIRMLY, THEY DISPATCH THE REFUGEES--AND THEN..
GET READY, ROCKY--HERE THEY COME...


WHACK
KWOOSH

BAH!... THE WATER TURNS TO STEAM BEFORE IT EVEN TOUCHES THE CREATURE!
SSSSSS

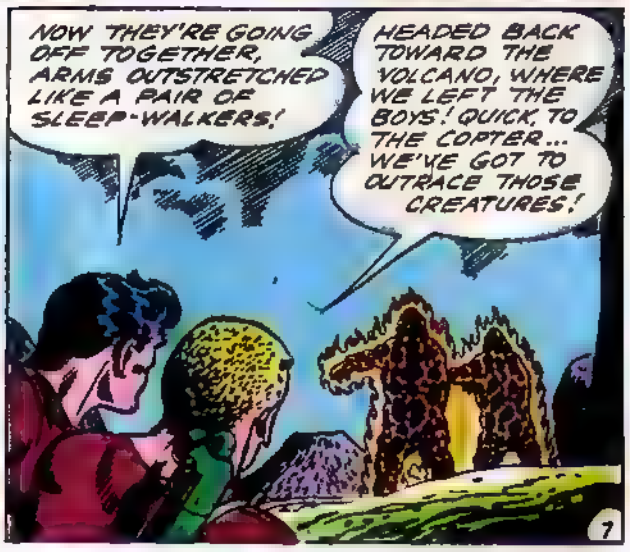

THEY'RE SPLITTING UP! YOU TRAIL ONE, ROCKY... I'M GOING TO TRY A LAST GAMBLE ON THE OTHER!


DASHING BACK TO THE COPTER, ACE SOON RETURNS WITH ANOTHER "WEAPON"...
A CARBON-DIOXIDE FIRE EXTINGUISHER! AND LOOK!... THE FOAM IS HURTING HIM!
YEAH... HE DOESN'T LIKE IT ONE BIT!
AROOO
FIZZZ


BUT SUDDENLY...
ROCKY! LOOK OUT! BEHIND YOU!
OH, OH... HE MUST HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED BY THAT HOWL FROM HIS BUDDY! HE--HE'S COMING STRAIGHT FOR ME!

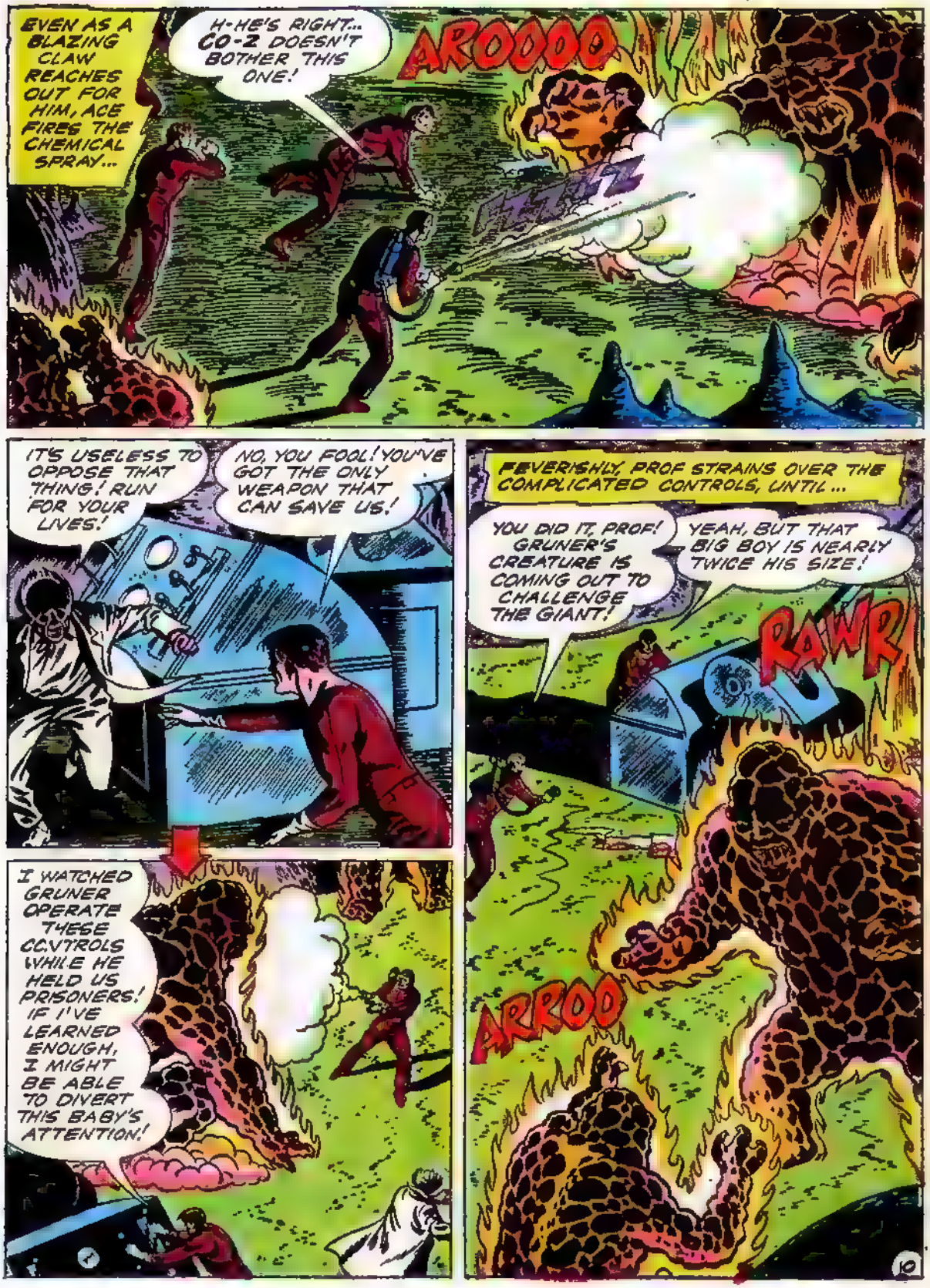
I'LL NEVER MAKE IT IN TIME! THAT THING IS ONLY A HAIR'S BREADTH AWAY FROM HIM!

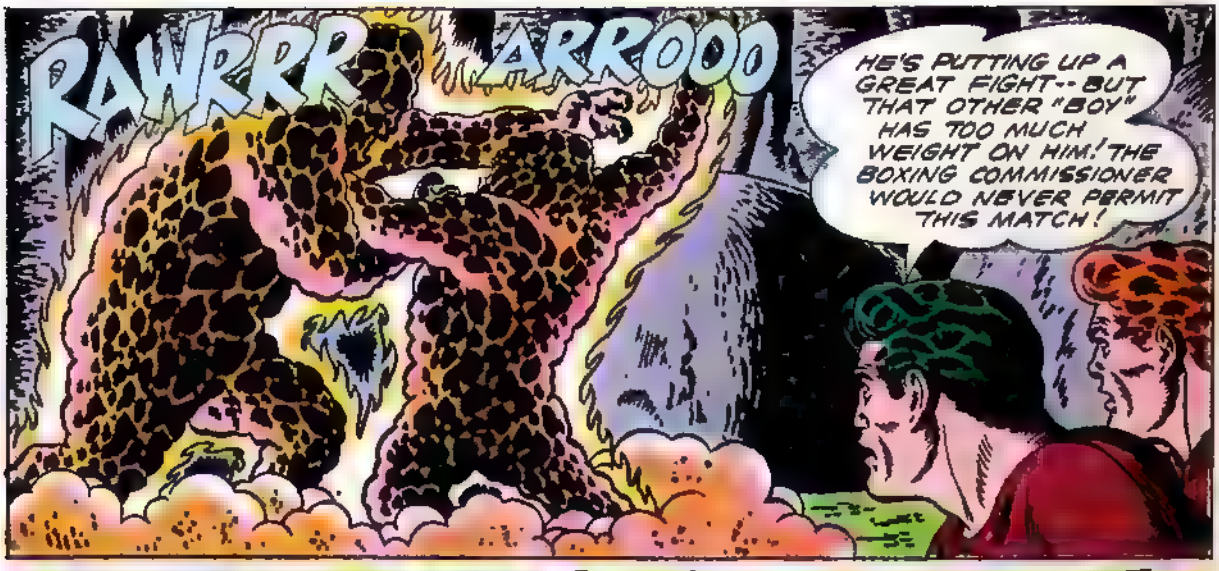
BUT ALL AT ONCE...
AWRRR
THE CREATURE-- IT JUST FELL BACK AND SPUN AROUND! WHY?
IT'S LIKE SOMETHING SUDDENLY TOOK HOLD OF IT!

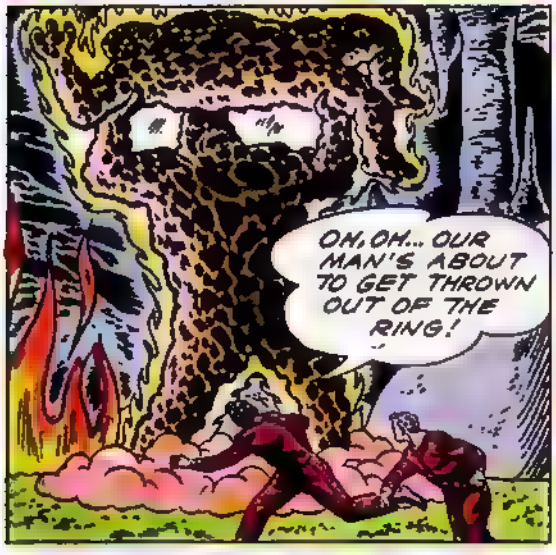

NOW THEY'RE GOING OFF TOGETHER, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED LIKE A PAIR OF SLEEP-WALKERS!
HEADED BACK TOWARD THE VOLCANO, WHERE WE LEFT THE BOYS! QUICK, TO THE COPTER... WE'VE GOT TO OUTRACE THOSE CREATURES!

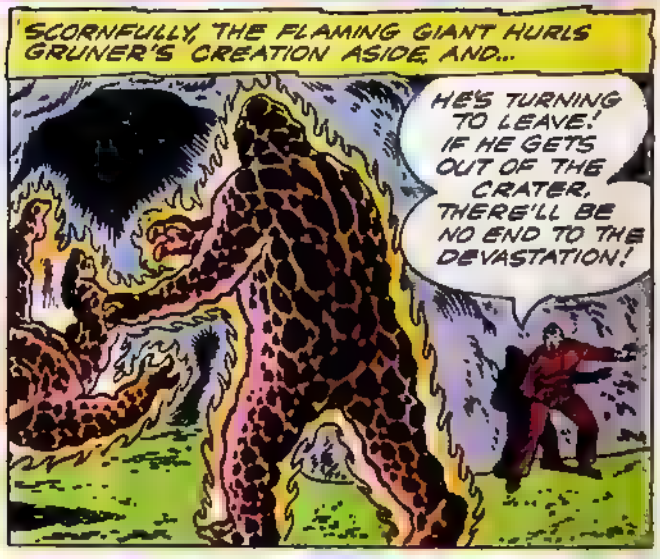
LANDING AT THE CRATER, THE PAIR HURRIEDLY BEGINS TRACING THE MAZE OF PASSAGEWAYS..
I HATE TO ADMIT IT, ACE, BUT I THINK WE'RE LOST! WE'VE BEEN DOWN THIS SAME CORRIDOR THREE TIMES NOW!
YES, BUT HERE'S A TURN-OFF WE MISSED EVERY TIME! LET'S TRY IT...
SHORTLY...
SHHH... I HEAR A VOICE!
AND SO YOU SEE, GENTLEMEN, AN ARMY OF SUCH INVULNERABLE FLAME CREATURES WILL MAKE ME THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ALIVE... HA, HA!
ANOTHER FLAME CREATURE! IT'S GOT RED AND PROF TRAPPED!
BUT NOT FOR LONG...
ACE! JUST IN TIME! BUT LOOK OUT, BUDDY... THAT BOY CONTROLS THE VOLCANO MEN, AND HE'LL TURN THIS ONE ON YOU!
PRECISELY MY INTENTION!
BEEP-BEEP-BEEP
BUT AS THE CREATURE WHIRLS TO FULFILL THE RADIO COMMAND...
RAWRRR
FZZZZ

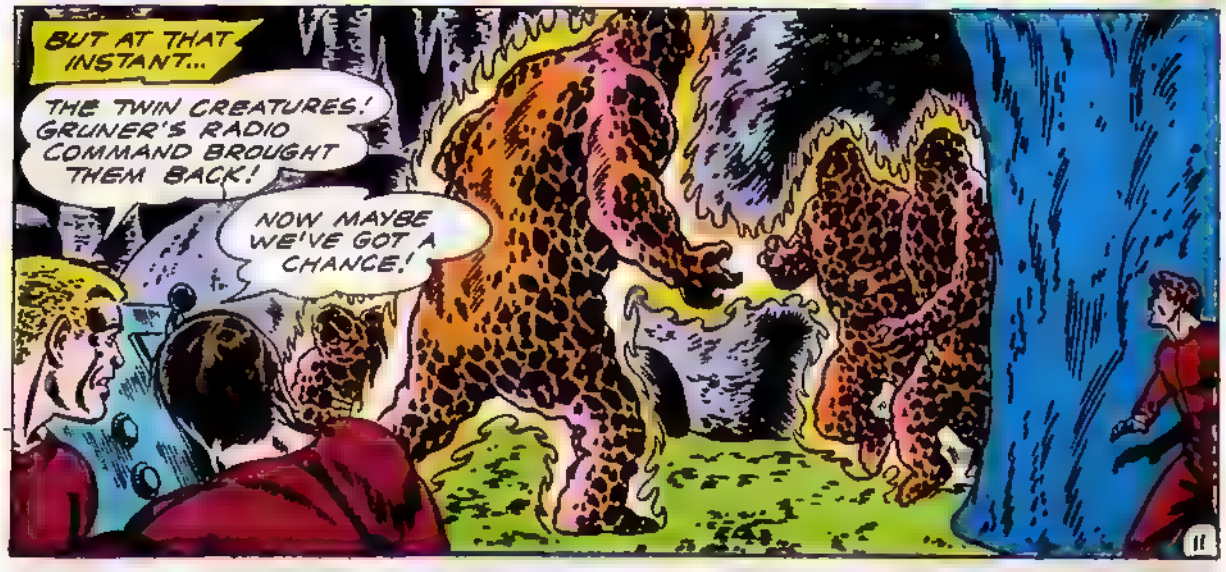
ROOO
HA, HA! THERE'S YOUR INVULNERABLE VOLCANO MAN, GRUNER-- CONERING IN FEAR FROM A SPRAY OF CARBON-DIOXIDE! NICE GOING, ACE!
SO FAR SO GOOD-- BUT WE'VE STILL GOT WORK TO DO! TWO MORE OF THIS GRUNER'S CREATURES ARE HEADED FOR THE VOLCANO!
BUT JUST THEN...
BOOM
YOW!... FEELS LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE!
KROOSH
CR-RACK
THE VOLCANO MUST BE COMING BACK TO LIFE!
GRUNER--YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS! YOU DRILLED INTO THE BASE TO TAP THAT THERMO-V ENERGY, AND-- OOOOF!
NO -- WAIT!... THAT'S WHAT HE UNLEASHED!
A VOLCANO MAN! THEN THE LEGEND WAS TRUE.. THESE THINGS DID EXIST IN NATURE! MY CONTROLS CAN NEVER COUNTER THAT GIANT... WE'RE DOOMED-- ALL OF US!
9


EVEN AS A BLAZING CLAW REACHES OUT FOR HIM, ACE FIRES THE CHEMICAL SPRAY...
H-HE'S RIGHT... CO-2 DOESN'T BOTHER THIS ONE!
AROOOO
IT'S USELESS TO OPPOSE THAT THING! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
NO, YOU FOOL! YOU'VE GOT THE ONLY WEAPON THAT CAN SAVE US!
I WATCHED GRUNER OPERATE THESE CONTROLS WHILE HE HELD US PRISONERS! IF I'VE LEARNED ENOUGH, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DIVERT THIS BABY'S ATTENTION!
FEVERISHLY, PROF STRAINS OVER THE COMPLICATED CONTROLS, UNTIL ...
YOU DID IT, PROF! GRUNER'S CREATURE IS COMING OUT TO CHALLENGE THE GIANT!
YEAH, BUT THAT BIG BOY IS NEARLY TWICE HIS SIZE!
RAWR
ARROO


RAWRRR
ARROOO
HE'S PUTTING UP A GREAT FIGHT--BUT THAT OTHER "BOY" HAS TOO MUCH WEIGHT ON HIM! THE BOXING COMMISSIONER WOULD NEVER PERMIT THIS MATCH!


OH, OH... OUR MAN'S ABOUT TO GET THROWN OUT OF THE RING!


SCORNFULLY, THE FLAMING GIANT HURLS GRUNER'S CREATION ASIDE AND...
HE'S TURNING TO LEAVE! IF HE GETS OUT OF THE CRATER, THERE'LL BE NO END TO THE DEVASTATION!


BUT AT THAT INSTANT...
THE TWIN CREATURES! GRUNER'S RADIO COMMAND BROUGHT THEM BACK!
NOW MAYBE WE'VE GOT A CHANCE!

AGAIN, PROF SENDS OUT SOME HURRIED RADIO SIGNALS, SO THAT...
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOU DID IT, PROF! THE "TWINS" ARE ATTACKING THE BIG BOY! LET'S SEE HOW GOOD HE IS WHEN THE ODDS ARE ALMOST EQUAL!
RAWRRR
ARRRR
HE DOESN'T LIKE THIS ONE BIT! AND LOOK... THE FALLEN CREATURE IS COMING BACK INTO ACTION!
YIPPEE!... THEY'RE TOPPLING HIM!
THAT DID IT! THEY'RE ALL BEING SWALLOWED UP IN GRUNER'S CAULDRON!
NOW, LET'S PUT A LID ON THAT POT!
ARDOOD

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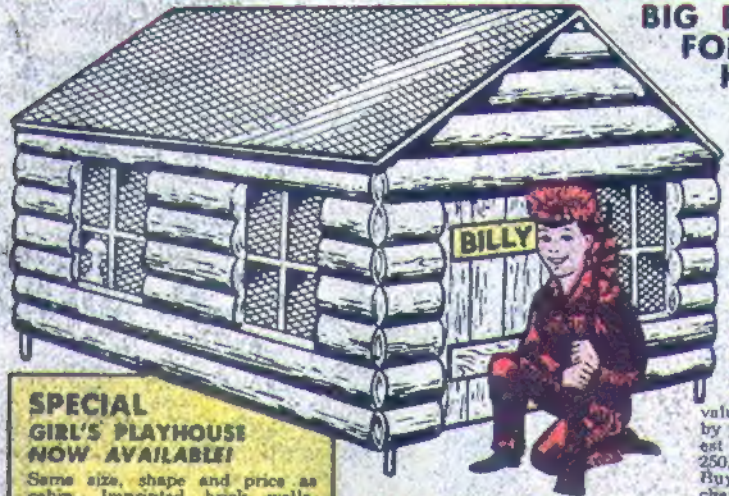

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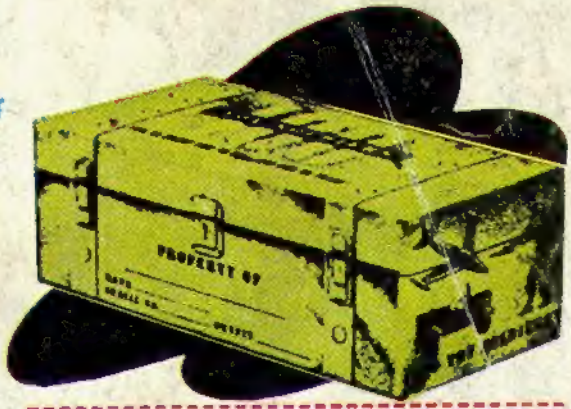

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